

FAITH SEEING GOD'S GLORY

NO. 3342

A SERMON
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“Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”
John 11:40

IT is not every man whose deed is as good as his word, but of the Son of Man, Christ Jesus, it may be said that whatever His lips have promised, His hands perform. He can, after the fact has transpired, turn to His disciples and say, “Said I not unto you, such-and-such, and is it not even as I said?”

Seeking sinner, Christ has said that you shall have peace if you believe on Him and He will not run back from that word. If you cast yourself upon Him, you shall have peace now—you shall have happiness evermore, you shall have heaven at the last—for there is no promise which Christ has made which He is not prepared to keep. There is no blessing which He presents to the hand of our faith which is either unreal, a sham, or a mockery. You shall find that Christ's gold is not mere tinsel, but true, and that His silver is silver tried in the furnace—good spending money, both for time and for eternity.

I shall hope to use the text tonight—may God, too, use it—first, *with regard to the case of our fellow men*, about whom many of us are much concerned. And then, in the second place, *with regard to our own case*.

Dear friends, I know that I touch a sympathetic chord in your hearts when I speak—

I. WITH REGARD TO OUR CARE FOR OTHERS' SOULS.

I bless God that so many of you love your fellow creatures and fellow sinners, and earnestly desire to promote their highest interests by bringing them to Christ.

You have tasted and known the sweetness of true religion for yourselves and you are not selfishly satisfied merely to rejoice in this, but long that others, too, may taste and see, as you have done, that the Lord is good. Now, I know that if you are really in earnest about the matter, you will often meet with *cases which will stagger your faith*, will throw you back entirely upon your God and compel you to make your passionate appeal to His omnipotence.

Well, the text addresses itself especially to those who meet with such cases. Poor Martha, when she saw the stone rolled away from the tomb of her dead brother, was shocked with what would meet the eye and nostrils of her Lord, and so, in deep solicitude and almost alarm, she declared, “Lord, by this time he stinketh.” The spectacle was too revolting, for he had been dead nearly four days, and in an Oriental climate that signified much that was repulsive. Terrible havoc would already have been worked on the body and she could not bear, I say, that the Savior should be exposed to such a spectacle.

Now, how often do we meet with men and women, young and old persons, whose case is a very terrible one! We do not like to speak of it. It is getting among the putrid things, for “it is a shame even to speak of the things which are done of them in secret.” There are some cases which are shocking, terrible, fearful. We may well wish that a stone may cover the cave so that they may not be seen, that they may be left unobserved as cases too vile for the ordinary gazer to look upon.

Have you never met with such? I am sure, my dear friends, if you are City Missionaries, or lovers of City Missionary work, you must meet in this great city with some of the most revolting instances of immorality, debauchery, dishonesty, and everything that is dreadful—and you are very apt to think that these are cases in which the Gospel will be out of place and the publishing of the news of pardoning love will be like throwing pearls before swine. The text, however, tells you something which may comfort you concerning such cases.

Perhaps I shall be addressing some tonight who have been laboring of late in connection with cases which appear hopeless to them, not so much from any gross immorality as from a hardness of heart which has come over the people. There may be a mother here tonight who is much concerned about her daughter—that daughter was once here, frequently here, but where she is at this moment the weeping mother does not know, nor does her anxious father—and it is with deep concern and sad hearts that some of us have asked, “Where can she have gone?”

While some thus actually leave the parental home and we fear, plunge into sin and excess, there are others who cause great anxiety in another way. They do not want to hear the Gospel which once greatly moved them—they have wearied of it—they contrive to stay away from the public worship and now the mother's admonitions have become positively irksome. The girl feels herself too big to yield to a father's counsels and entreaties.

Perhaps even worse than this is the case you have been praying for—the case of one who actually denies and flouts the religion of Jesus Christ, who declares it is all a sham, a mere form got up that priests of all sects may get a living by it. Perhaps even blasphemy has taken the place of attention to the Word. You feel, as you think of such a one, who is the object of your love, that you would give up your very heart if you could but have a hope of his ultimate salvation—but he seems to have gone too far.

Now, you cannot get him to listen to the Word. He is tonight—yes, good woman, your own husband—where is he? He is possibly in the gin palace, or even worse. You fear that at the very moment when you are sitting here, some for whom you have been pleading night and day are plunging deeper and deeper into sin, and that when you reach home, the cross you will have to endure will be to hear hard things and bitter, against the Savior whom you love, and to see and hear those dear to you thus penetrating further and further into the lairs of wickedness.

Now, you see, you have a desperate case before you, and I want, if God shall help me, just to push the text home. Christ says, “Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?” This death, this burial, this “stinking” of Lazarus—to use the expressive word of Martha—all this is only a platform for the divine glory to display itself upon. This horrible sin, this hardness of heart, this rejection of the Word—all this is only a stage whereon the grace of God, in answer to your prayerful faith, shall come and do its wonders.

Let me tell you what you will yet see if your faith is able to lay hold upon Christ. You will see *the conversion of these lost ones*, and then you will see the glory of God, for you will say, “Could God have given His only-begotten Son instead of such sinners as these?” Did it never strike you as strange that there should be two—one, the perfectly holy Christ, the beloved Son of God, and on the other hand, a reeling, cursing, blaspheming drunkard, and that God would sooner smite His Son than smite that drunk? That He should even grieve His Son and make Him smart, rather than that that blasphemer should smart?

Truly, when the Jews made the choice of a robber rather than Christ, it was a strange choice and only to be understood by their wicked infatuation. But here, such is the power of God's love that when one out of two must suffer, He chooses that the innocent Christ should suffer and that the drunken, blaspheming sinner should go free! Truly “God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”

Look at it again. There is this great sinner whom we have been describing—is it not marvelous that Jesus Christ could really give Himself for such a one? He has been in prison, perhaps, two or three times, and he has done everything that is bad, and yet, oh! wonder of wonders!—the Lord Jesus Christ gives Himself for him! Now, “scarcely for a righteous man would one die: peradventure for a good man one would even dare to die,” but God commends His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

What! Did Christ shed His blood for thieves, and harlots, and drunkards? Yes, sir! as much as for the self-righteous, and even more so, for while the self-righteous miss heaven by reason of their pride and

refusal of His salvation, some of these, coming humbly to the cross, find pardon through the precious blood.

But it is a great wonder—and when a soul of this kind is converted you *do* see the glory of God. You do not understand the miracle of love it expresses, in that Christ could die for such a mass of spiritual corruption, as some of His creatures have really made themselves to be, before they had been helped by sovereign grace to trust in Christ. As the glory of Christ's power was seen in Lazarus coming out of the grave, though He had been four days dead and was corrupt, so the same glory is seen in the conversion of every great sinner.

What! Does the former swearer pray? Yes, and prays better than half of them, and much more earnestly. Oh! what depth of feeling, what groanings that cannot be uttered, comes welling up from his grateful, adoring heart. Does “the woman who was a sinner” love the Savior? Yes, and she washes His feet with her tears and wipes them with the hair of her head, thus doing more for Christ than Simon did, whose guest He was, though he thought he had done so much.

Ah! yes, grace can make bright saints out of black sinners, can take the very scum and dregs of Satan's dominions and make them into sparkling jewels to glitter in the crown of divine grace forever. It is wondrous what the grace of God can do.

My dear Hearer, if you should happen to feel yourself to be degraded by sin, do not give up! Do not think that Christ cannot save you. Do not let Satan tell you tonight that Christ can never save you. Look upon this case of Lazarus—“By this time he stinketh, for he has been dead four days,” and yet where the worm had been, where corruption had been, life came back at the Savior's word. And so shall it be with you. He can save you. He can save you now! He can save you from the blackest of your sins and make you sing His praises. The glory of God, then, is seen in the conversion of every sinner, but most conspicuously in the conversion of the chief of sinners.

And this glory is also seen in the fact that these sinners, when saved, hold on and continue to the end. I have sometimes heard it said of such a one, “Ah! he will never hold out!” I bless God that there have been so many whom God has blessed in this house who have held out year after year. Look over our church records—see the names of very nearly three thousand, six hundred souls associated here in church fellowship, and in a year how many are excommunicated for their sins? Why, enough to make us grieve, but so few that they make us wonder at the grace of God which keeps them.

Many of them have been brought in while young and they have been exposed to many temptations—some plucked from the depths of sin—and yet they are an honor to the Christian church of which they are members, and I can speak of them in every company into which I move and say that they honor Christ, and prove the power of the Gospel and the reality of conversion.

Brethren, we see the glory of God, not only in the regenerating of those who were once great sinners, but even more remarkably displayed when we see that they do not go back to their old sins, but they have become such new creations that it is impossible for them to return to the old evil life and its evil loves and longings.

So, then, it appears from the text that if we are praying for our friends, their present condition ought not to stagger us, and however bad their state may be, we should only hear the Savior telling us that He is making herein larger room for the display of His matchless grace. So we should be encouraged to pray more earnestly for such—rather than even for a moment to give them up as though such case were hopeless.

Now, who is it that sees the glory of God in the conversion of a soul? When a man has produced some masterpiece of art or other genius, he likes others to see it. Who are they who see great sinners when they are converted? Who are they? We read of one stone upon which were seven eyes. When such a sinner is saved, all eyes are set upon him.

Why, *his neighbors see him*. Some of them hate the change, but they cannot help seeing it. When a great sinner is converted, beloved friends, his wife knows of it, his children know of it, his relatives know of it, and it is a matter of wonder to them all. “Oh!” they say, “So-and-so has become a Christian.”

Very likely they say he has become a Methodist, or a "Spurgeonite," or some such ugly name. They are sure to call him by the name of the minister whom God has blessed to him.

And then they talk of it in the workshop and he gets jeered at for it, but they say, "Ah! what is this? Here is a kind of religion come amongst us, which really has power over people to alter their lives, which takes them out of the old ruts in which they were wont to run, and puts them on a new highway, and turns their minds in another direction! What is it?"

So that friends and relatives see it, and enemies see it, too, and what is still more remarkable, it becomes a theme of *wonder in other worlds*! Devils see it and they do not like it—and they resolve to overthrow the man—but all the devils in hell cannot destroy a true child of God. You know Toplady's saying about the grace of God. He says it is like leaven—if you once get it into the cake you may boil it, you may fry it, you may bake it—but you cannot get it out. And so, once get the grace of God into a man's heart and you cannot get it out again. God does what the devil cannot undo when He makes "a new creature in Christ Jesus."

And then the angels see it. We have God's Word for that, for we are told that they rejoice over one sinner that repents. A poor woman upstairs in a garret found the Savior and her finding the Savior affected three worlds in one moment. It made earth glad. It made hell howl with indignation and it set heaven in a blaze of extraordinary joy. Do not the harps of the angels thrill with super-celestial harmonies when they hear of sinners being eternally saved? Do they not lift up a new paean, and yet more exalted praise unto Him who trod the wine-press alone, and of whose victory these souls are the reward?

Yes, earth, and heaven, and hell, all know of it. *We know it* for the text says, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God"? It is a very great comfort in one's labors to see those who are truly converted. Of course, we ought to be able to work on and to believe in success, even if we cannot yet see it, but it is a great delight to be privileged to see the sheaves cut and then carry them to the Great Husbandman and say, "That is a sheaf You gave me."

I have heard of Mr. Matthew Wilks, the famous but eccentric preacher, being waited on by some of his very excellent and very proper members to reprove him for some of his quaint sayings. "Well," said Mr. Wilks, "if you will wait just a little, I will answer you." Going upstairs, he brought down a long roll, which contained the names of those whom God had blessed and saved through his ministry. "Now," said he, "all these precious souls have been brought to God by these sermons which you feel moved to criticize. By the grace of God I will preach yet more of them."

And so may every minister say when God gives him success, for it strengthens him in his work. You, dear Sunday School teachers, who teach in your classes, you who distribute tracts, you who preach in the streets—if God gives you conversions, I am sure you will go on with your work. It will whet your appetites. You will want more. You will never be satisfied, but will press on in your Master's service.

But now comes in an "if," and then I will leave this point. "Said I not unto thee, *if* thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God"? That is the matter. Why is it that we are not more successful? It is because we do not believe.

I heard a conversation the other day, something like this. A brother said—and a very excellent brother, too—"When I go into the pulpit I go hoping that perhaps God will bless the word that I am going to deliver, prayerfully seeking that He would do so, and feeling satisfied that it will be according to His mind and will, and believing that if I preach the Word, perhaps it will be blessed."

Another brother said, "Well, my brother, I think you are right, but I do not go into the pulpit in that way at all." "How then?" asked the other. "Why," was the answer, "I go into the pulpit believing that God is going to save souls tonight, that I am going to be made by Him the instrument of it, and I preach, believing that while I am preaching, souls must and will be saved—that it is not a chance that may be, but that it must be, that God's Word will not return unto Him void, but will prosper in the thing whereto He has sent it. I hope I am as humble as if it were a peradventure, but I am all the more earnest, I trust, because I feel certain that now souls will be blessed."

Now, I do believe that God does bless in a very great measure according to what we believe will be the result, and that if we can only stand and preach Christ, believing Christ will come to souls and souls will find Him, then the more of such faith that we have, the greater will be the results. Beloved, do we always pray in faith, as we ought? We pray here at every prayer meeting that God would save souls—but do we believe that He certainly will hear us? If we do not, we shall lose the blessing. We must believe not only that God is, but that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, or we shall miss His blessing.

Oh, what a mercy to rise from your knees and say, “I have got it! I asked for souls and God has heard me, and I shall see my desire and be satisfied. I have prayed definitely for conversions, and conversions will be given me.” Brethren, in such a church as this, where God is so manifestly and so marvelously working, we ought to be forever expecting conversions.

You, Christian people, as you sit in the pews should be looking out for God to bless your friends and believing that your dear children will manifest the first signs of His gracious saving power. Then should you encourage these seedlings of promise and put the young plants in the hothouse of deep love during the winter of their conviction, so that they may not be withered or blighted, but come to be plants of God's right-hand planting.

Expect the blessing. It is coming! It is coming! God is blessing His church and He intends to bless it yet more. He has opened the windows of heaven, and He is pouring out the blessing, so that we have not room enough to receive it. We have not even now room enough to receive the hearers—the day is coming when we shall not have room enough to hold the church. Only let us pray and work—and God, even our own God, will bless us and bless His other churches, too—and the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

So you see, then, the whole matter is—if you can believe. Now, Mother, can you believe about your child? Now, good woman, can you believe about your husband? Now, my brother, can you believe about your wife? May God help you to believe Him! Depend upon it, the struggle is there. It is much harder for you to believe in God than it is for God to convert your wife, much harder for you to trust God about your child than it is for Him to save your child. It is much easier for God to save the harlot, drunkard, the thief, than it is for us to think He will do it.

But when we can believe in Him, and believing, boldly pray for it and expect it, we shall get it, and he that was repulsive but yesterday shall be fragrant with divine grace tomorrow. He that rotted in his tomb but the other day, so far gone that men turned away from him, shall come into the midst of God's church, be found among the living in Zion, and make the church on earth and the church in heaven glad in his society. But now we must have a few minutes in which to use the text for—

II. THE COMFORT AND BLESSING OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT THEMSELVES SAVED.

I do not suppose, dear friends—speaking to those of you who are awakened and quickened in your consciences—I do not suppose I could give a character of you which you would think to be too bad. You once thought yourselves very good and excellent, but it is quite a different tale with you now. God the Holy Spirit has met with you and made you see yourselves, and now you are ashamed of yourselves. You feel as if you were dead, as if you had no power, no life.

You feel more, you seem as if you were buried. Satan tells you that there is no hope for such as you are, and you feel as if you were like Lazarus, really corrupt in soul, so that you cannot sometimes endure yourselves. You cannot sleep at night—your fears distract you. You are afraid that God will do with you as Abraham did with his dead, that is, bury you out of His sight.

I have known many like you and whenever I have met with them, I have been glad, for I have always felt that God was about to bless them when they could never bear, much less bless themselves. It was just then, when they thought so badly of themselves, that God thought well of them. Now, dear friends, I say, I cannot describe your condition as being worse than you really think it to be, for you really now feel yourselves to be about as bad as a man could well be.

Now, what about you? Why, this—that the badness of your present condition is no barrier whatever to your salvation if you can now, enabled by divine grace, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to save you. I will not enter into your past life, nor into your present state. We will suppose both to be outrageously bad, if you like. You may say that you have no feeling, no sensibility, that you cannot repent, and a great many other things.

But now, can you believe that Christ can save you? Can you trust Him to do it? If you can, then all there is of hardness in you—even if it were ten times more—could not avail to keep you out of heaven. “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” If your heart be hard, pardoning love can melt it. If you have no repentance, Christ is exalted on high to give repentance. If your will is stubborn, He can make you willing in the day of His power. Can you believe this?

Have you not heard the story? It was God Himself who died on Calvary. It was none other than that same one who made the heavens, who came down on earth, and became a man for the sake of men, and on the bloody tree expired in extreme agonies. He, “very God of very God,” though a man like you, died that sin might be put away and that sinners might be saved.

Sinner, can you believe this? Can you trust Him? “Yes, I should trust Him,” says one, “but I cannot.” I do not mean what you can do, but can you trust Him to do? Can you believe? For if you will believe on Him, you shall see the glory of God. “But I cannot see.” No! No! No! It does not say if you can see, but if you believe, you shall see. Believing comes first, and then follows the seeing, and what is it you are to see? The glory of God.

Now, supposing you were a very good sort of person and had not any sin, it would not be any glory to God to save you. Why, you would not need saving—you could save yourselves, or there would be nothing from which to be saved. What glory would then be His? But if, on the other hand you can see nothing to nurture it—then, in your wondrous salvation would the glory of God be gloriously seen.

You, and others, too, would see God saving you in spite of your sin, and in the teeth of your soul's corruption, and in defiance of all the powers of evil. Such a sight of God's glory will make it impossible for a single note of praise to be given to yourselves, but all the glory, all the glory shall be to His rich, all-conquering, sovereign grace.

Now, man, can you believe this? Can you trust Jesus Christ alone, to utterly save you? Sink or swim, can you throw yourself into the sea of Jesus' love? Now, man, can you just give yourself up to Christ to save you, for if you will believe, you shall see the glory of God. You shall see that glory in your pardon, in your new creation, in your being sustained under temptation, in your being kept in the hours of life, in the night of death, in your being lifted up at the day of judgment to receive an acquittal, and in your being presented faultless before His presence with exceeding great joy.

Mercy, in her dream—if you recollect—laughed, and when Christiana asked her why she laughed, she said it was because of what she had dreamed. Now, verily, I have known what it is to laugh in the same way. I have thought of myself as black, defiled, corrupt, unworthy, and then I have thought of myself as one day wearing a crown, of waving a palm branch, of bowing before the eternal throne, having neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing—and verily, I have seemed to laugh that ever that should be true, and my soul has leaped at the very thought that I—yes I! shall tread the streets of gold, passing through the gates of pearl, and see *His* face and bow before *Him*—I, who was once filled with sin and corruption, filled to the brim with the vision of God.

And brethren and sisters, we will meet there and what a wonder it will be that we should ever get there! Do you not think they will sometimes say to one another in heaven, “I remember—it is almost enough to make me weep to remember—when I stood in the tavern and made others laugh at a lascivious jest and when I could sing a merry song. Oh! how different from the song that now engages this happy heart and from the music that comes from these blessed strings!”

And do you not think that another will say, “And I remember haunts of wickedness and vice that dare not be mentioned here, but I am washed.” And oh! when they think of that, they will strike up again

the grand old song that will always yet be new—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, unto him be glory forever and ever." I am of the same mind as the good old soul who said that if Jesus Christ ever took her to heaven, He should never hear the last of it. And He never shall!

*"I'll praise Him in life, I'll praise Him in death,
I'll praise Him as long as He lendeth me breath;
And say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now."*

Aye!, and up there in heaven, we shall still praise Him. We shall not have time to think of anybody else, nor to think of any but our Lord.

*"Jesus sought me when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of God.
He to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood."*

Why, if an angel had come to me seventeen years ago and had said to me, "Now, my lad, get up from that bedside"—there was I, about that time, on my knees before God, with many tears, thinking that I should never be saved. I had longed and entreated for mercy from my childhood, without having any comfortable answer. And I considered that I was amongst the reprobate and was meant to illustrate forever the justice of God in hell—if, I say, an angel had come to me at that time and said, "Come, my lad, you will one day preach the Gospel to thousands of sinners, and tell them what a dear Savior you have found"—do you think I would have believed him? "No," I should have said, "that will never be."

Why, it is such a change for me to be here talking to you from being there, afraid of the wrath of God, that I do not know how to talk of it! But oh! that is nothing. That is no change at all compared with our being taken away to heaven, with our being taken up where angels dwell, above all, where He dwells, that Blessed One whom, though we have not seen, we love and unceasingly adore, to be in His bosom forever, to be kissed with the kisses of His mouth, to be His dear ones, to live in His Father's house, where the many mansions be! Oh! the glory of God! What a sight that will be!

And Sinner, if you will believe, you shall see it! Where did you come from tonight? Where are you going when you leave this service? I hope you will go back a different man, a different woman! If you will believe, you shall see the glory of God. Oh! may the Holy Spirit constrain you to believe tonight. May this be the time when you shall come empty-handed and take Christ to be your all-in-all. May this be the instant when you shall be done with your self-righteousness, when you will give up trying to save yourself, and come and rest where God would have you rest—in the blood of His dear Son, in His death, His resurrection, in His intercession before the throne.

Oh! come, sinner! God help you to come! Come! all black and ruined. Come! all lost and defiled. Come! though you be as one dead, nay, like Lazarus rotting in the tomb of your sins, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." In the name of Jesus, thus I speak to you and He speaks to you through me. Come forth! Come forth! You corrupting Lazarus! Come forth! 'Tis Jesus bids you come. Trust Him! He bids you trust Him and whosoever trusts Him shall see the glory of God forever. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 11:1-26

Verse 1. *Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.*

In God's Book, towns are most remarkable for saints that dwell in them. "The town of Mary and her sister Martha." A day will come when a city shall be more illustrious for a saint than for a Caesar—be more renowned for deeds of faith than for deeds of battle. It was "the town of Mary and her sister Martha."

2-3. *(It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick). Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*

They did not say anymore. They felt that it was quite enough to tell Him that Lazarus was sick, and they left it to the tender heart of Jesus to do whatever seemed good in His sight. Some prayers would be all the better if they were shorter—all the better if they did not so much declare our own will as declare our confidence in the good will of Christ. I like the omissions of Martha's and Mary's prayer.

4. *When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*

Our Savior speaks in a different style from us. We would have said that the sickness was unto death, but ultimately, to the glory of God. But He who sees the end from the beginning speaks with a grandeur of style which could not be imitated by us. So the Lord speaks of things, not as they seem to be, nor even as they are in the present moment, but as they shall be in the long run. "Not unto death, but that the Son of God might be glorified."

5. *Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.*

Yet Lazarus died. Jesus loved Lazarus, yet Lazarus was sick. Jesus was not of that cruel sort of people, of whom we have some in these days, who call themselves saints, and who attribute all sickness among God's people to their sin or to their want of faith. Not He. Here was one that was sick, but Jesus loved him just as much for all that.

6. *When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.*

Notice the connection. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus"—and yet when He had heard that Lazarus was sick, "He abode two days still in the same place where he was." Sometimes true love may think fit to make us wait. It may be the truest love on God's part to let us lie sick and not to come post-haste to us to make us well. Ay, the truest love may demand that the sickness should turn to death, for out of the death He may bring the greater glory. The Lord acts not upon the scale of man, for He sees not as man sees. He sees the end as well as the beginning.

7. *Then after that he said to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again—*

And that because He loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. If that love in its wisdom made Him tarry, yet that love in its sincerity at last moved Him to seek the house of grief.

9. *Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?*

Is there not a time in which the sun will not go down—in which it is safe and right for men to work?

9-10. *If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.*

There is a singular turn, is there not, in that expression? We expected it to be, "Because he seeth not the light of the world," instead of which the Savior says, "Because there is no light in him"—because in spiritual things our light not only comes from above, but it shines within—and without that inner light we are sure to stumble.

11. *These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.*

It is the Savior's way to use terms concerning His miracles, which, so far from exaggerating them, even appear to depreciate them. He is about to raise a man from the dead, but He says, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." I am afraid that our tendency is always to describe our actions in the largest possible terms consistent with truth, perhaps sometimes forgetting

those last words. But the Savior describes truthfully what He does, but still in terms which, like His humanity, seem to veil the glory. Wonderfully condescending is it of Him to speak thus—

12. *Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.*

It is considered to be a sign of getting better when a patient can sleep.

13-16. *Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

A singular mixture of faith and unbelief. He so believes his Master that he is willing to die with Him. He so doubts Him that, although the Savior had plainly told him that He was immortal till His work was done, yet he is afraid that His Master and all of them will be put to death. Oh, the Lord knows us better than we know ourselves, and the Lord accepts us notwithstanding our infirmities.

17. *Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.*

So that he was probably dead as soon as the messengers arrived to tell the Savior that he was ill.

18. *Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.*

Just a nice little walk which our Savior had often taken in the evening after the toils of the day in Jerusalem. He had loved to make Bethany His quiet resting place. "Fifteen furlongs off."

19-20. *And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him: but Mary sat still in the house.*

Because she had not heard that Jesus was come, or else, no doubt, she would have been there as soon as Martha.

21. *Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*

They had often said to one another, "Oh, we wish the Lord would come." They had sent for Him. They felt sure that He would come. But alas, their brother had died before the Master had arrived—and now this thought which was uppermost in their hearts is uppermost in their speech, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

22. *But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it to thee.*

There is faith there, and there is unbelief, too. She believes that Christ can have what He wills of God, but she does not recognize His own personal Godhead—His own power to work resurrection.

23-26. *Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*

She looked upon the resurrection and the life as things that were to be in some dim and misty future. "No," says Christ, "I am the resurrection and the life. Not only do I get these things by prayer from God, but I am these things." And then He goes on to explain it. He says, "I am the resurrection. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. I am the life. Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" He has taken her out of the thought of this poor common animal-life into the thought of the spiritual and higher life, which is, indeed, to the soul what the resurrection is to the body. It was well for the Savior thus to teach her higher truth than as yet she knew.

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